



GWACS AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE CONTRACTUAL VEHICLES

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I. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND.

The purpose of this paper is to familiarize program and acquisition personnel with relatively new contractual vehicles that have been developed as a result of the Federal Acquisition Reform Act of 1996 (FARA) and the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996 (ITMRA), now jointly known as the Clinger-Cohen Act. These new contractual vehicles, specifically Government-wide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs) and Multiple Acquisition Schedule (MAS) contracts offer program personnel significantly more sources to satisfy their requirements, shorter acquisition lead-times, and more competitive prices. These contracts also offer a wide variety of products and services including information technology, management assistance, environmental services, and laboratory testing and analyses. Furthermore, these contracts count toward meeting EPA's socio-economic goals.

By using these new alternative contractual vehicles, ordering offices need not seek further competition outside the GWACs or MAS contracts, synopsise the requirement, nor make a separate determination of fair and reasonable pricing. Moreover, there is no longer a maximum order limitation on most of these alternative contracts. In addition, program personnel can utilize the expertise of EPA contracting officers (COs) to provide assistance in selecting and managing the most appropriate contractual vehicle to satisfy program requirements. On many of the GWACs and MAS contracts, EPA COs can be delegated procurement authority to place task orders, to ensure appropriate management controls are in place, and to negotiate lower prices/administrative fees. In fact, if procurement authority is delegated to an EPA CO, the host agency's administrative fee may often decrease from between 4% and 8% to 1%.

EPA maintains a number of its own contractual vehicles to provide commonly required services. These contractual vehicles should be utilized whenever practicable. Accordingly, program offices should consult with an EPA CO to first review existing EPA contracts before attempting to access another agency's contract that may meet the program office's requirement.

EPA COs can assist program offices in preparing a new Agency contract or in locating a contract from the list set forth in this paper to satisfy a program office's requirement. This collateral effort will both ensure that an interagency agreement (IAG) is prepared when required and that appropriate management control clauses are included in task orders requiring the contractor to take certain actions; for e.g., safeguarding confidential information or sensitive data, and addressing potential conflict of interest (COI) issues. These management controls avoid placing EPA in a vulnerable position when contracting for services by ensuring close collaboration between procurement personnel and program officials in order to develop clear and precise statements of work. Moreover, these controls ensure that the Government retains inherently governmental decision making authority and that services are obtained in the most cost effective manner, without barriers to competition, and free of any potential conflicts of interest.

II. ALTERNATIVE CONTRACTUAL VEHICLES.

At the outset it should be noted that, due to misinformation posted on various agency websites, a great deal of confusion has arisen regarding the accessibility to and concomitant requirements of GWACS, MAS contracts, and Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs). The following discussion is intended to dispel any further confusion on the part of EPA program and contracting personnel with regard to access to and use of GWACs, MAS contracts and BPAs.

A. GOVERNMENT-WIDE ACQUISITION CONTRACTS.

Government-wide Acquisition Contracts or GWACs are indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contracts for various information technology (IT) resources negotiated, awarded and administered by one particular agency but available to other Federal agencies for purchases. GWACs are not subject to the requirements and limitations of the Economy Act, 31 U.S.C. § 1535, particularly the requirement to enter into an IAG before accessing a GWAC. In accordance with Section 5112(e) of the Information Technology Management Reform Act (ITMRA), 40 U.S.C. § 1412(e), “the Director [of OMB] may designate one or more heads of Executive agencies as executive agents for Government-wide acquisitions of information technology.” Accordingly, when a “host” or servicing agency possesses § 5112(e) authority, a CO does not need to enter into an IAG with that servicing agency to access its GWAC. See Section D of this paper for a full discussion of the requirements and limitations of the Economy Act.

The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), however, has advised this office that the Director of OMB has provided the aforementioned § 5112(e) authority to only five agencies: (1) the General Services Administration; (2) the National Institutes of Health; (3) the Department of Transportation; (4) the Department of Commerce; and (5) the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Moreover, this authority only applies to certain contracts administered by these five agencies. Therefore, prior to accessing a GWAC, it is a CO’s responsibility to ensure that the subject GWAC is, in fact, an “authentic” GWAC, i.e., one administered by an agency with the requisite § 5112(e) authority. Section IV(B) of this paper contains a list of § 5112(e) GWACs.

B. MULTIPLE AWARD SCHEDULE CONTRACTS (FEDERAL SUPPLY SCHEDULES).

The General Services Administration (GSA) directs and manages the Federal Supply Schedule program thereby providing agencies with a simplified process for obtaining commonly used commercial supplies and services at prices associated with volume buying. FAR 8.401(a). In fact, nearly every commercial product and major service provider is available under a GSA schedule at volume buying prices. These MAS contracts essentially allow GSA to negotiate a single fair and reasonable price for a product or service thereby allowing any other Federal agency to merely issue a purchase order for that product or service. Orders placed against a MAS, using the procedures outlined in FAR Subpart

8.4 are considered to be issued using full and open competition. Accordingly, ordering offices need not seek further competition, synopsise the requirement, make a separate determination of fair and reasonable pricing nor consider small business programs. These contracts are accessible on the Internet by accessing GSA's Advantage Website at: <http://www.fss.gsa.gov> or through the Federal Technology Service website at: <http://www.fts.gsa.gov/programs.html> An IAG need not be established to use these contracts.

C. MULTI-AGENCY CONTRACTS.

A multi-agency contract or MAC is a task or delivery order contract established by one agency for use by other Government agencies to obtain supplies and services. The broad term MAC includes contracts for information technology established pursuant to § 5124(a)(2) of ITMRA and contracts for other supplies and services. When using a MAC, remember that the requirements and limitations of the Economy Act apply. Accordingly, an IAG would be required and the procedures addressed by FAR § 17.503 must be followed. Prior to placing an order under a MAC, fully discuss the requirements for use with the contracting agency.

D. BLANKET PURCHASE AGREEMENTS.

A Blanket Purchase Agreement or BPA is a simplified method of filling anticipated repetitive needs for supplies or services by establishing "charge accounts" with qualified sources of supply, i.e., MAS contracts. See FAR 13.303. Although the negotiation of a BPA can be a relatively simple process, each BPA must contain the following information: (1) a description of the supplier's agreement to furnish supplies or services; (2) a statement that the Government is obligated only to the extent of authorized purchases actually made under the BPA; (3) a statement that specifies the dollar limitation for each individual purchase under the BPA; (4) a statement that a list of individuals authorized to purchase under the BPA shall be furnished to the supplier by the CO; (5) a requirement that all shipments under the agreement shall be accompanied by delivery or sales slips containing specified minimum information; and (6) a statement relating to invoice procedures. See FAR 13.303-3.

E. THE REQUIREMENTS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE ECONOMY ACT.

As stated in Section II(A) of this paper, unlike GWACs which are governed by Section 5112(e) of ITMRA, multi-agency contracts are subject to Section 5124(a)(2) of ITMRA, 40 U.S.C. § 1424(a)(2), which essentially allows an agency to procure IT resources without obtaining specific authority from OMB. Of significance however, is the fact that any action taken pursuant to Section 5124(a)(2) of ITMRA must be in accordance with the requirements and limitations of the Economy Act, 31 U.S.C. § 1535.

The Economy Act, 31 U.S.C. § 1535, provides authority for the head of an agency or major organizational unit within an agency to place an order with another agency for goods or services only if the following conditions are met:

- (1) amounts are available;
- (2) the head of the ordering agency or unit decides the order is in the best interest of the United States Government;
- (3) the agency or unit to fill the order is able to provide or get by contract the ordered goods or services; and
- (4) the head of the agency decides ordered goods or services cannot be provided by contract as conveniently or cheaply by a commercial enterprise.

FAR § 17.503, entitled “Determinations and finding requirements”, implements the requirements of the Economy Act and sets forth the following requirements that a CO must meet in order to access a multi-agency contract.

- (a) Each Economy Act order shall be supported by a Determination and Finding (D&F). The D&F shall state that –
 - (1) Use of an interagency acquisition is in the best interest of the Government; and
 - (2) The supplies or services cannot be obtained as conveniently or economically by contracting directly with a private source.
- (b) If the Economy Act order requires contracting action by the servicing agency, the D&F shall also include a statement that at least one of the following circumstances is applicable –
 - (1) The acquisition will appropriately be made under an existing contract of the servicing agency, entered into before placement of the order, to meet the requirements of the servicing agency for the same or similar supplies or services;
 - (2) The servicing agency has capabilities or expertise to enter into a contract for such supplies or services which is not available within the requesting agency;
or

- (3) The servicing agency is specifically authorized bylaw or regulation to purchase such supplies or services on behalf of other agencies.
- (c) The D&F shall be approved by a contracting officer of the requesting agency with the authority to contract for the supplies or services to be ordered, or by another official designated by the agency head .

In light of the above, prior to accessing an alternative contractual vehicle in accordance with Section 5124(a)(2) of ITMRA, specifically a multi-agency contract, contracting personnel must ensure that all of the requirements of FAR 17.503 are met.

III. HOW TO ACCESS EPA AGENCY-WIDE CONTRACTS, GWACS AND MAS CONTRACTS.

All EPA Agency-Wide Contracts, Government-wide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs), and Multiple-Award Schedule Contracts are accessible through OAM's Intranet Web Site under "GWACS and Other Alternate Contract Vehicles" under Procurement Policy Information at <http://intranet.epa.gov/oamintra>.

A. EPA AGENCY-WIDE CONTRACTS.

Generally, EPA's own contracts are a program office's first source for procuring supplies and services. There are a number of EPA contracts already in place that can accommodate a variety of program office needs as evidenced by the following:

1. Information Technology Services

a. **Information Infrastructure & Architectural Support Contract (IIASC).** This contract provides a full range of technical services to support all aspects of planning, designing, analyzing, improving, monitoring, and implementing information technology solutions. For further information contact Mary Rogers, Contracting Officer, at (202) 564-4729. Complete ordering information is available at: <http://epawww.epa.gov/oamintra/hpod/iiasc>

b. **Mission Oriented Systems Engineering Support Contract II (MOSES II).** MOSES II provides a wide range of systems development and maintenance, information engineering, and database management support. For further information contact Sherry Lutz, Contracting Officer, at (202) 564-4513. Ordering information is available at: <http://epawww.epa.gov/oamintra/hpod/moses/>

c. **Information Management Center Services Contract.** This contract provides information management services for the agency's libraries, Public Information Center and record centers at EPA Headquarters and locations at any of the regions and laboratories. For further information contact Paul

Dawson, Contracting Officer, at (202) 564-4473. Ordering information is available at:
http://www.epa.gov/oamhpod1/oppts_grp/0010150/index.htm

d. Washington Telecommunications and Computing Services (WTACS) Contract.

WTACS provides a full range of telecommunications, desktop support, LAN management, web page development and technical services to EPA's Headquarters. Program offices requiring LAN system administrators, desktop support, system analysts, web development services, and support for office moves and renovations order these services through the Agency's Working Capital Fund. For further information, contact the Contracting Officer, Jennifer Johnson at (202) 564-4733 or the Project Officer, Dwight Rodgers at (202) 260-2082

e. National Telecommunications and Computing Services Contract (NTACS). NTACS is designed to meet EPA's computing and telecommunications service requirements at its National Computer Center (NCC) in Research Triangle Park, N.C., the National Environmental Supercomputing Center (NESC) in Research Triangle Park, N.C., and at various EPA sites nationwide. Contract administration responsibilities for this contract are handled by Dana Lloyd, Manager, Office of Administration and Resources Management-RTP Service Center at (919) 541-4364 and Larry Simon, Project Officer at (919) 541-2297.

f. National Telecommunications Contract. This contract provides EPA with a broad range of telecommunications support services in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, at Research Triangle Park, N.C. and at regional, laboratory, and field sites located throughout EPA. The services include: (1) routine ongoing and ad hoc telecommunications operations, including installation and maintenance work; (2) design, configuration and installation and/or operation of all types of wide-area, metropolitan area, and premise telecommunications systems; (3) consolidation of a centralized Federal Telecommunications Service (FTS) telecommunications infrastructure support and the Voice/Video Technology and Engineering Center (VTEC) and; (4) other areas pertaining to analysis, development and implementation of telecommunications service and equipment selections. For further information contact the CO, Jennifer Johnson at (202) 564-4733.

2. Information Technology Hardware/Software BPAs

EPA has recently awarded a number of BPAs with several vendors to supply virtually the same supplies (personal computers, printers, scanners, and servers) as those found in NIH's and NASA's GWACs - at a lower price and in a more timely manner. A list of BPAs and complete ordering information is available at <http://epawww.epa.gov/oamintra/hpod/bpagen.pdf>.

3. Alternative Dispute Resolution Services Contract

This contract offers a vehicle for: (1) convening, facilitating, conducting and evaluating regulatory negotiations, policy dialogues, workshops and other dispute resolution and collaborative problem solving processes and; (2) conducting alternate dispute resolution proceedings (mediation, arbitration) for site or facility specific cases. This contract is available for use by all of EPA, including the regions and laboratories. For further information contact Phil Osborne, Contracting Officer, at (202) 564-4782.

4. National News Agency Blanket Purchase Agreement

This BPA provides subscriptions to various newspapers and magazines. Check first with your OAM service center for the terms and conditions before using this BPA..

B. GOVERNMENT-WIDE ACQUISITION CONTRACTS.

The most commonly utilized GWACs within EPA are those with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). These contracts provide information technology hardware and software as their primary focus and, because they are 5112(e) GWACS, they are not subject to the Economy Act. EPA COs have been delegated procurement authority to order under these GWACs contracts. In addition, EPA has recently awarded a number of BPAs with several vendors to supply virtually the same supplies contained in the NIH and NASA contracts. In most cases EPA is able to negotiate a lower price than those found through the GWACs and the procurement may be processed in a more timely manner. Summary information for the five GWACs is provided below with hypertext links to each contract. These contracts provide for IT hardware and services. Surcharges vary from contract to contract and the method for accessing each contract varies as well. Please contact Tom Caffrey, Manager, ADP Contract Management Service Center at (202) 564-4498 for information regarding the utilization of these vehicles.

Since each of the GWACs listed below have unique ordering requirements and administrative fees, orders placed under these contracts should be coordinated with Alan Trail, Contracting Officer, at (202) 564-4726. Generally, the project officer with assistance from the contracting officer, will prepare a statement of work, funding documentation, independent government cost estimate, and evaluation factors. The award will be made based on best value where tradeoffs between technical and price factors, or to the lowest priced, technically acceptable (LPTA) contractor.

OMB has delegated GWAC authority to only the following five (5) agencies for specific contracts described below, despite numerous internet sites and teaching materials claiming GWAC authority.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Outsourcing Desktop Initiative (ODIN) at <http://outsource.gsfc.nasa.gov/> provides hardware and software acquisition, as well as maintenance, helpdesk, and other ancillary support services.

Scientific and Engineering Workstation Procurement (SEWP II) at <http://www.sewp.nasa.gov/> has multiple contracts that offer a vast selection and wide range of advanced technology UNIX and NT workstations, peripherals, network equipment, and other services to all Federal Agencies.

General Services Administration

Applications and Support for Widely-diverse End User Requirements (ANSWER) Contract at http://www.fts.gsa.gov/fts_mall/smartgov/answer/answer.htm provides for services in requirements and design research, analysis and definition; system development and software maintenance; facilities planning; management and technical support for business, scientific and engineering applications.

Millennia Lite Contract at <http://www.lite.gsa.gov/> provides a wide variety of professional IT support services categorized into four functional areas: planning, studies and assessment; high-end IT services; mission support services; and legacy systems migration and new enterprise systems development.

Disaster Recovery Services for Federal Computer Systems and Networks Contract at <http://www.fedcac.gsa.gov/disaster.stm> provides computing and communications recovery services to test and refine organizations, contingency plans, and to restore and recover operations in the event of a declared disaster.

Millennia Contract at <http://www.fedcac.gsa.gov/millennia.stm> includes a broad scope of IT services including new and emerging technologies. The scope of support is intended to cover all requirements for IT, including computers, ancillary equipment, software, firmware and similar applications, services (including support services), and related resources. The contract is designed for very large systems integration and software development projects. General tasks could fall into three functional areas: software engineering; communication; and systems integration.

GSA Seat Management Services Contract at <http://seatmanagement.gsa.gov/> offers agencies the ability to acquire full service desktop computing resources (e.g., software, hardware, and technical support services) from general to high performance. Seat management services support scientific, engineering and mixed environments.

Integrated services and the required components can be acquired. The services offered encompass the management, operation, and maintenance of the desktop, portable desktop servers, communications, printers, peripherals, and their associated network infrastructure and components as a unified service.

Virtual Data Center Contract at <http://www.fedcac.gsa.gov/VDCS.stm> provides a full range of primary data processing and support services for hardware and software, including: all essential components and resources to service and maintain data center computing; system back-up and disaster recovery services; operations and systems support; systems and application software support; and migration support and acceptance testing support.

Telecommunications Integrator Services (Telis) Contract at <http://www.fedcac.gsa.gov/Telis.stm> provides telecommunications integrated solutions across voice, video and data technologies. Services offered include: personnel support for design, documenting, programming, implementing, managing, maintaining and supporting LANs and WANs; video equipment and systems; switched voice communication networks; and hardware and software.

Smart Card Contract at <http://www.fedcac.gsa.gov/smartcard.stm> includes supplies and services necessary to support a common, interoperable, multi-application smart card. The smart ID card will contain information carried on a chip to be used by agencies commonly across applications. The smart card can be used to provide basic visual identification, identification authentication, physical and logical access control, and other value-added features.

IT Solutions 8(a) Multiple Award Contracts at [http://www.fast.gsa.gov/iti/fast/FastFiles.nsf/Lookup/sdc/\\$file/sdc.html](http://www.fast.gsa.gov/iti/fast/FastFiles.nsf/Lookup/sdc/$file/sdc.html) provides a broad range of high quality, IT, non-complex integration services from 8(a) contractors through a small business set-aside multiple award contract under the Federal Acquisition Services for Technology (FAST) program. These services can range from simple connection of personal computers to peripherals, through construction LANs, up through installation of WANs.

Federal Computer Acquisition Center (FEDCAC) at <http://fedcac.gsa.gov/> has is a solutions development center that awards, and administers IT contracts, and will develop solutions on behalf of a specific client or for Government-wide use.

Federal Systems Integration and Management Center (FEDSIM) at <http://fedsim.gsa.gov/> will analyze your needs, determine the best acquisition strategy, and provide the private sector solution that best meets your needs.

Department of Transportation

TROY Systems Inc.Contract at <http://www.troy.com/about.html> has core competencies in information assurance, network engineering and development, life cycle programming and analysis, internet/intranet systems design and development, instructional systems design and development, training, and program management services.

Information Technology Omnibus Procurement (ITOP) Contract at <http://www.itpolicy.gsa.gov:80/mke/gwac/gw28itop.htm> provides a wide range of information technology related support services including: (1) information systems

engineering support services, (2) systems/facilities management and maintenance support services, and (3) information systems security support services.

National Institute of Health

ELECTRONIC COMPUTER STORE II (ECS II) Contract at <http://nitaac.nih.gov/Nhome/ECS%20II/ecs2homeframe.html> has 47 prime contractors available to meet your desktop computing information technology needs.

CIO-SP Contract at <http://nitaac.nih.gov/Nhome/CIO/ciohomeframe.html> 20 prime contractors and multiple subcontractors available to provide information technology hardware, software, systems, and services in support of IT solutions.

IMAGE WORLD Contract at <http://nitaac.nih.gov/Nhome/IW/iwhomeframe.htm> has 23 prime contractors and more than 200 subcontractors available to provide document management and imaging systems products and services .

Department of Commerce

COMMERCE Information Technology Solutions (COMMITTS) Program at <http://www.commits.doc.gov/> is a GWAC vehicle to satisfy information technology requirements that are appropriate to be performed by small, small disadvantaged, 8(a), and women-owned small businesses capable of meeting federal agency's IT requirements. The COMMITTS program has 58 diverse small business partners providing information technology solutions in three major functional areas: information systems engineering support solutions; information system security support solutions, and systems operations and maintenance support solutions.

NOTE: Orders placed under the COMMITTS program, other GWACS, and multiple award schedule contracts count toward meeting EPA's socio-economic goals.

C. MULTIPLE AWARD SCHEDULE CONTRACTS.

Ordering information and a complete listing of GSA's schedules is located at GSA's Schedules E- Library at <http://www.fss.gsa.gov/customers.cfm>. Enter the special item number (SIN) listed below, for example, 70 is the designation for General Purpose Commercial Information Technology Equipment, Software and Services or 874 is the designation for MOBIS. Enter this SIN number in the box titled "Go Directly to Federal Supply Schedule." Ordering procedures from GSA Schedule Contracts are described in Procurement Policy Notice 99-03 which is available at <http://epawww.epa.gov/oamintra/policy/ppn.pdf>. No IAG is needed to use these contracts since EPA COS will place and administer the individual orders.

The same operational divisions in Headquarters, Research Triangle Park or Cincinnati currently providing contract support to program offices will provide support for the Schedule purchases. EPA contracting officers working with project officers will ensure effective management oversight of the service contracts listed below by including management control clauses in task orders to require the contractor to take certain actions, e.g., safeguarding confidential information or sensitive data. Some of the more commonly used schedules utilized by EPA are as follows:

Schedule 70 - General Purpose Commercial Information Technology Equipment, Software and Services. Please contact Susan Kantrowitz, Manager, ADP Contract Placement Service Center on 202-564-4317 for further information.

Schedule 873 - Laboratory Testing and Analysis Services

- 873-1 Mechanical Testing, Evaluation and Analysis
- 873- 2 Chemical Testing, Evaluation and Analysis
- 873- 3 Electrical Testing, Evaluation and Analysis
- 873- 4 Geo-Technical/Thermal Testing, Evaluation and Analysis
- 873- 9 New Technology

Schedule 874 - Management, Organization, and Business Improvement Services (MOBIS)

- 874-1 Consultation Services
- 874-2 Facilitation Services
- 874-3 Survey Services
- 874-4 Training Services
- 874-5 Support Products
- 874-6 Privatization Support Services and Documentation (A76)
- 874-7 Program Integration and Project Management Services
- 874-8 Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Services

Schedule 899- Environmental Services

- 899-1 Environmental Planning Services & Documentation
- 899-2 Environmental Compliance Services
- 899-3 Environmental/Occupational Training Services
- 899-4 Waste Management Services
- 899-5 Hazardous Materials Management Advisory Services
- 899-6 Telephone Advisory Services

Multi-Agency Contracts

There are many multi-agency contracts from other agencies that may be available for EPA's use. However, there is no centralized listing or place to go to obtain these products or services. To address this problem the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) requested information from agencies and is planning to launch a Web site listing products and services available on multi-agency contracts, but there is no schedule when this effort will be finalized. According to OFPP, 15 agencies have reported 643 contracts for products and services which are available to other agencies. However, since some agencies have been granted extensions, the number of contracts available to other agencies could be greater.

If you have a need for products or services which might be available through another agency, please contact your CO. The CO will assist you in making inquiries about the availability of multi-agency contracts, ordering procedures which are subject to the requirements and limitations of the Economy Act, and unique administrative fees per order. Remember, that if you use another agency's CO to place the order, rather than getting delegated procurement authority for EPA's CO to place and administer its orders, you will most likely need to establish an IAG through EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment. Fully discuss the requirements for use with the contracting agency and the EPA CO before placing an order.

An Interagency Agreement (IAG) signed by both the EPA Decision Official (program office designee) on behalf of the EPA Program Office and the EPA Grants Operation Branch Award Official may be required to utilize multi-agency contracts. The IAG must define the project period, budget period, scope of work, commitment verification, statutory authority for the transfer of funds, and accounting data. Signatures are also required from both the decision official on behalf of the EPA Program Office, and Award Official from the Grants Operations Branch on behalf of the EPA. Without this information work performed by a contractor may constitute an unauthorized commitment and the invoice will be rejected by EPA's paying office. For information on placing an IAG, please call Sandy Williams, Grants Administration Branch, at 202-564-5369.